

Redstone Arsenal, Ala.

PS Magazine Turns 50 Next Year

ATTENTION! Soldiers who served from June 1951 to the present: MSG Half-Mast needs your help as he puts together the 50th anniversary issue of PS Magazine (June 2001).

He wants to hear how PS helped you maintain your equipment, and he needs pictures of the magazine, if you have them, and pictures of where you served! You'll be recognized for your contribution in the 50th-

PS magazine's MSG Half-Mast wants your help in putting together the periodical's 50th-anniversary issue.

year issue of PS if he's able to include it in the 50th-anniversary issue.

Send your letter by Dec. 1 to: Commander, USAMC Logistics Support Activity, ATTN: AMXLS-LP, Redstone Arsenal, AL 35898-7466.

Questions? Call PS at (256) 955-9878 or (DSN) 645-9878, or send e-mail to psmag@logsa.army.mil. — *U.S. Army Material Command Logistics Support Activity*

Alexandria, Va.

Celebrating American Education Week

THE Army again focuses on strengthening its resolve to educate America's soldier-students to meet the challenges of leadership today and tomorrow as part

of American Education Week, Nov. 12-18.

This year's theme is "Army Education—Anytime, Anyplace—Helping Soldiers Achieve," which underscores the philosophy that started AEW. Representatives of the National Education Association and the American Legion first met in 1919 to discuss the distressing fact that 25 percent of the

country's World War I draftees were illiterate and 9 percent were physically unfit. As a result of that meeting, the modern Army has become a knowledge- and capabilities-based force.

The Army Continuing Education System offers a variety of programs to assist soldiers in obtaining their college degrees or high school equivalencies,

Finance News

Army Adopts EZPay and Eagle Cash

THE Army has granted permanent status to an experiment that gives new soldiers a new way to pay for items at post exchanges.

The Army "stored-value card" began as a pilot program for basic trainees in 1997 at Fort Leonard Wood, Mo.

Now the prototype cards at different sites are being replaced with a standard EZPay card. Trainees at Fort Jackson, S.C., began using the new card in July.

Other Army initial-entry training sites — Fort Benning, Ga.; Fort Knox, Ky.; Fort Leonard Wood; and Fort Sill, Okla. — were to begin using the new card by the end of October, officials said.

The card works like this: When basic trainees arrive on post, they receive their advance pay of \$200 to \$300 on an EZPay card. The card contains a computer chip that keeps track of how much money is on it.

Trainees use the card as they wish to pay for haircuts, snacks, recreation and PX purchases. Any value remaining on the card after it expires is returned to the trainee's military pay.

Ernest Gregory, deputy assistant secretary of the Army for financial operations, said the cards also save \$125,000 of soldiers' money a year, because they eliminate the need to purchase money orders. "Now soldiers aren't paying to get paid," he said.

A version of the card is also being tested for deployed soldiers in Bosnia and Hungary. Stabilization Force soldiers began using the "EagleCash" cards in camp exchanges last December.

The EagleCash cards in Bosnia are reloadable, said value card project manager Juan De Jesus. He said cash can be electronically transferred onto the cards with the push of a button at the finance office.

At the end of the year, officials will evaluate use of the cards in Bosnia, De Jesus said, and decide if other sites such as Kosovo, Kuwait and Honduras might benefit from the use of chip technology or electronic money. — *Army News Service*



and take into consideration soldiers' busy careers and personal time. No longer tied to traditional classroom education, soldiers now can also earn their degrees through distance-learning programs sponsored through their local Army education centers.

Stop by your education center for more information on ACES programs and services, or visit the Army Education website at www.perscom.army.mil/education. While you are there ask about AEW-related events. — *Army Continuing Education System*

A Thanksgiving Message

Thanksgiving Day 2000

THANKSGIVING is the time when we pause to express our gratitude for the blessings of peace, freedom and opportunity that are the birthright of all Americans. In his first Thanksgiving Proclamation in 1789, President George Washington asked the American people to give thanks "for the great degree of tranquility, union and plenty which we have enjoyed." Fortunately, more than two centuries later, we still enjoy these wonderful gifts. That we can do so is due in no small measure to the eternal vigilance and sacrifice of the men and women of the U.S. Army.

And so on this special day we offer our appreciation to you, the soldiers and civilians of the Army, who serve our nation with a level of devoted service unparalleled in any other profession. Each day, 24 hours a day, you willingly step forward to defend the American people from all enemies, foreign and domestic, and to uphold the values and principles that we hold so dear. Wherever you serve, at installations here at home or at duty stations abroad, the American people appreciate your hard work and daily sacrifices, because they know that their security and prosperity are possible only because you defend their liberties.

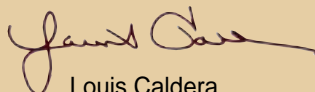
Grateful citizens of more than 70 countries welcome your service because they directly benefit from the presence of the trained and dedicated soldiers deployed in their lands. From preserving democracy in Korea to rebuilding civil society in the Balkans, you are an inspiration and example to peoples who see in you the hope and bounty of America.

And so to all of you, the dedicated men and women of the U.S. Army, uniformed and civilian — and especially to those of you who serve far from hearth and family — we offer special thanks for the difficult and dangerous work that you are doing in behalf of the citizens of our great nation.

We wish all of you and your loved ones a safe and happy Thanksgiving holiday.



GEN Eric K. Shinseki,
Chief of Staff



Louis Caldera,
Secretary of the Army



Alexandria, Va.

MWR Offers Internet Travel Planning



SOLDIERS and their families can plan their leisure trips easier with **Offdutytravel.com**. That's a new website created specifically for active-duty service members, Department of Defense civilians, retirees, their families and other eligible users.

Offdutytravel.com is online with special travel deals, free or low-cost trip arrangements, links to airlines, cruise lines, car rentals, train service, the Armed Forces Recreation Centers and even travel tips.

As Internet travel sites proliferate and as many travel agencies began to charge for services that were once free, the Army's leaders decided the military community needed an easy, inexpensive or even free way to make leisure travel arrangements.

"**Offdutytravel.com** gives information on the services available and offers links and phone numbers for providers. We've tried to put all the information at one convenient location, and we're working really hard to help soldiers so they aren't taken advantage of as

the travel industry goes through a transitional period," said Dan Yount, leisure travel program manager in the U.S. Army Com-

munity and Family Support Center's Business Programs Directorate in Alexandria, Va. CFSC is the Army agency responsible for MWR programs and services.

In addition to fares, schedule information and links to other travel sites, there are links to companies that offer eligible users special rates on transportation services, and on travel and auto club memberships. Purchasing tickets or other travel services through those companies also returns a commission to the user's installation, money that helps pay for local MWR programs and activities.

"The website is there as a service to help you save money," Yount said. "We try to negotiate deals that will give either special values or a lower price for the service."

Yount said CFSC is also working to provide computers in on-post information, ticket and reservation offices so that everyone has access to the website. — *U.S. Army Community and Family Support Center Public Affairs Office*

Washington

More ARNG in 10th SFOR Rotation

BY the end of 2001, more than 10,000 National Guard soldiers will have served in Bosnia since late 1995.

The troop total will actually hit 11,414 when the Stabilization Force begins its 10th rotation in October 2001 with a record 2,461 Guard soldiers serving for six months, according to an Army Guard official in Arlington, Va.

That's when the Virginia Army Guard's 29th Infantry Division is scheduled to take command of the multinational force in the U.S. sector.

"Ten thousand citizen-soldiers is a significant contribution to our Army and to the people in Bosnia who have lived in relative peace since the ethnic fighting ended in November 1995," said MG Roger Schultz, director of the

Army National Guard.

Furthermore, some 350 troops from North Carolina, Oklahoma and Arizona were the first Guard soldiers to assume a combat posture among the multinational force in the U.S. sector when they began peace-keeping duties in October for the coming winter.

The Texas Army Guard's 49th Armored Div. completed its half-year of command in that region, also in October.

The new Guard troops, primarily from North Carolina's 30th and from Oklahoma's 45th enhanced separate brigades, will be part of the sector's security force under the active Army's 3rd Inf. Div.

Another 136 military police from Rhode Island departed for Hungary in August and will spend this winter operating in Croatia and Bosnia.

The 3rd Inf. Div., commanded by MG Walter Sharp, will lead 3,900 U.S. soldiers from several different units during the

next two Stabilization Force rotations.

Georgia's 48th Inf. Brigade, for example, has already begun preparing 1,200 soldiers for Bosnia duty next April.

The troops have a pretty good idea of what lies ahead.

Presence patrols will be the basic job in Bosnia for the 170 soldiers from Oklahoma's 45th Inf. Bde. and for the tank

crews and mechanized infantry troops from North Carolina. — *National Guard Bureau PAO*

Heidelberg, Germany

USAREUR Bars Firearms Shipping

SOLDIERS and civilians are prohibited from bringing their

TRICARE Update

Phone Call Can Resolve TRICARE Billing Issues

TRICARE beneficiaries are now just a phone call away from accessing help to resolve creditors' concerns over late or unpaid medical bills.

"These problems tend to occur when physicians are impatient for payment, as they have a right to be. However, the burden of dealing with this system, or any system, should not fall on the individual service member," said Bernard D. Rostker, undersecretary of defense for personnel and readiness.

This new program formally established debt collection assistance officers as local points of contact that eligible TRICARE beneficiaries may use to resolve medical-bill payment issues.

The new DCAO system, Rostker said, creates a formal method through which beneficiaries can "gain help in dealing with what admittedly is, as is every health-maintenance organization, a bureaucratic process."

The main thing, Rostker said, "is we don't want our people to feel they've been isolated. This is a part of the system and we want to be able to help them if and when this kind of situation occurs."

TRICARE beneficiaries can click a hyperlink button on the system's information website, to identify their local assistance officers, Bonifas said. In a month or two, active-duty service members will see the phone number for their local DCAO on their leave and earnings statements, she added.

In addition, beneficiary counseling and assistance coordinators at all military hospitals and clinics and at TRICARE lead-agent offices can provide assistance for all other TRICARE issues, such as claims, explanation of benefits and enrollment procedures, Bonifas said.

Rostker called the DCAO program a timely response to important service member concerns.

For more information about TRICARE, visit the Military Health System/TRICARE website at www.tricare.osd.mil.

— *American Forces Press Service*



MSG Bob Haskell

A North Carolina Army National Guard soldier prepares to fire his weapon during a predeployment training exercise at Fort Stewart, Ga.

privately owned firearms to Germany.

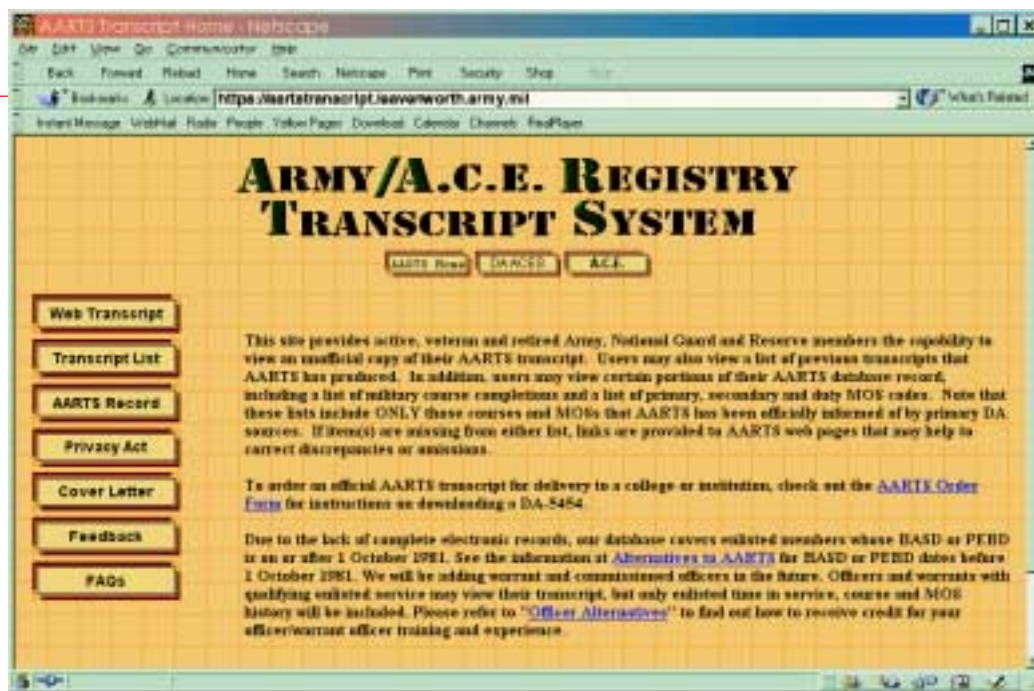
USAREUR is reminding incoming personnel that they may not ship, transport or hand-carry privately owned firearms to Germany. This restriction became effective in September.

This temporary restriction is necessary to avoid the possibility of German criminal prosecution for unauthorized possession of weapons or the possibility of punishment under the Uniform Code of Military Justice.

USAREUR and Germany's Ministry of the Interior are developing procedures to enable military and civilian personnel and their dependents to obtain German weapons-possession cards through the USAREUR

Registry of Motor Vehicles.

The restriction will be modified or rescinded when the weapons permit procedures are finalized and implemented. — USAREUR PAO



Alexandria, Va.

Enlisted Transcripts Online

ENLISTED soldiers can now receive their Army transcript online through the Army/American Council on Education Registry Transcript System, a partnership between the Army and the American Council on Education.

The transcript translates a soldier's formal military education and job experience into civilian language and includes college equivalent credit recommendations.

Eligible soldiers or veterans, by just visiting the AARTS transcript page at www.leavenworth.army.mil/aarts, have easy access to their military education histories. The site has information for enlisted soldiers with a Basic Active Service Date or Pay Entry Service Date of Oct. 1, 1981, or later.

"By following the link to the secure transcript web server and providing some basic information, a soldier or veteran can access his or her transcript," said Cindy Nielsen, chief of AARTS operations.

She said the online capability allows eligible individuals to review previous transcript re-

The website allows individuals to see the ways in which their military jobs and experience may equate to college credit.

quests and mailing dates; review completed military courses and MOS history; view an explanation of the transcript; and find points of contact for AARTS and ACE.

"We now receive 2,000 transcript requests weekly, but anticipate that the website will be accessed more as soldiers use the new online capability," Nielsen said.

"Though the new system is taking care of a lot of requests, an official copy sent by AARTS to a college, employer or other third party still requires a signature," said Dr. Eugene Sullivan, military programs director of the ACE Center for Adult Learning. He said soldiers may mail or fax a signed transcript request form, DA Form 5454-R, to: AARTS Operations Center, 415 McPherson Ave., Fort Leavenworth, KS, 66027-1373. The fax number is (913) 684-2011 or (DSN) 552-2011.

Sullivan also emphasized that the AARTS website has everything you need to know about AARTS transcripts, including the request form. — *Army Continuing Education System*

Education News

Preventing Education Loan Defaults

THE Army Loan Repayment Program is witnessing a trend that may have dire results for soldiers. As loans are sold or transferred among varying loan holders, there has been an increase in the number of misdirected payments.

To protect their credit ratings, soldiers should contact the new company whenever they hear of a change in loan holders and ensure that the Army knows where to mail payments.

"In several cases, the payment is disbursed to the loan holder originally verified by the soldier," said Sarah Rowley of the Education Incentives and Counseling Branch at the U.S. Total Army Personnel Command in Alexandria, Va. "The payment is not forwarded to the new loan holder, but rather is sent back to the Defense Finance and Accounting Service, which then contacts EICB and requests the actual loan location.

"The consequences for neglecting a loan are default or a bad credit rating," she said. "Soldiers are advised to remember that the Army does not assume an individual's loan. The soldier is responsible for his or her payment and loan status."

If your LRP loan was transferred to another lender, fax the old and new lender information to EICB at (703) 325-9811 or send it to CDR, PERSCOM, ATTN: TAPC-PDE-EI, Room 940, 2461 Eisenhower Ave., Alexandria, VA 22331-0472.

For more information about the loan repayment program visit Army Education Online at www.perscom.army.mil/education. — *Army Continuing Education System*